

## *Our Beautiful Church*

— A SERIES OF ARTICLES DEPICTING THE MAGNIFICENCE OF OUR CHURCH —

### PART NINE: THE OTHER CARVINGS

#### THE CARVING OVER THE QUEENS BOULEVARD PORTAL

Over the doorway on Queens Boulevard is represented Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the center and source of Divine Grace, poured out for mankind through the Sacraments (*photo 1*). Christ is represented at the Last Supper, with the Bread to be changed into His Body and the Chalice of Wine to be changed into His Blood. From the altar of the Sacrifice of the New Law may be seen seven streams, from which two balanced figures of deer appear to drink.

The water recalls the words of Christ to the Samaritan woman: *Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life (Jn 4:14-15)*. The inscription across the tympana refers to the figures of deer, in the words of Psalm 42: *As the hart panteth after the living waters*. (In modern translation, the complete sentence reads: *As the deer longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God.*) St. Peter, to whom Christ gave the plenitude of His Priesthood as His Vicar on earth, and St. Paul, in whose epistles are explained so completely and beautifully the Sacrifice of the New Law and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, are represented on either side of Christ.



*PHOTO 1: The carving over the Queens Boulevard portal*

#### ORNAMENTAL CARVINGS

The ornamentation of the bosses in the arch above the tympana of the main portal (*photo 2*) follows the traditional symbolism associated with the Passion of Our Lord and the Holy Eucharist:



*PHOTO 2: The ornamentation of the bosses above the tympana of the main portal . Details: photos 3–12.*



*PHOTO 3: The Holy Eucharist*



*PHOTO 4: The Sacred Heart*



*PHOTO 5: The Book of Laws*



*PHOTOS, left, clockwise: (6) The fruits of the earth and animals from the air, earth and water. (7) The loaves of bread. (8) The anchor. (9) The sun, moon and stars. (10) The grapes. (11) Pax (Peace), with the Maltese Cross .*



*PHOTO 12 (right): The Scale of Judgment and the Ten Commandments tablets.*



Photo by Pepa Tanousis

**THE WOODEN CARVINGS AROUND THE PULPIT**

Viewed from left to right, the four pulpit statues, carved in wood, represent St. Ambrose, St. Peter, St. Augustine and St. Jerome. These saints were chosen because, by the power of the written and spoken word, they were instrumental in spreading Christianity around the world. It is therefore appropriate for the pulpit from which we hear present-day preachers to be adorned with their inspiring images. **St. Ambrose (PHOTO 13)** became the most eloquent preacher of his day (4th century). Ambrose was one of the great figures in early Christianity, and more than anyone else was responsible for the end of paganism and the rise of Christianity in the West, in the dying years of the Roman Empire. He wrote profusely, and many of his hymns became the standard for Western hymnody. He baptized St. Augustine in 387. **St. Peter (PHOTO 14)** was the first Pope and embodied the entire concept of the primacy of the papacy. He is mentioned more frequently in the Gospels than any of the other apostles and became head of the Christians after the Ascension. He was also the first of the apostles to preach to the gentiles and converted many with his preaching. **St. Augustine (PHOTO 15)** was inspired by St. Monica, his mother, and by the preaching of St. Ambrose to embrace the Christian faith. He began to preach, and through his great intellect and eloquence molded the thinking of the Western world to such a degree that his ideas continue to occupy a major position in today's Christian world. He wrote profusely; among his best-known works are his *Confessions* – one of the greatest spiritual classics of all times. **St. Jerome (PHOTO 16)** was highly skilled in Latin and Greek. He was baptized in Rome in 360, settled in Antioch and then went to Rome to become the Pope's secretary. While there, he began to revise the Latin version of the four Gospels, the letters of St. Paul and the Psalms. He devoted most of his time to his translation of the Bible into Latin from the original tongues. His greatest achievement was his translation of the Old Testament and his revision of the Latin version of the New Testament. From this version – the *Vulgate* – almost all English Catholic translations were made.



*PHOTO 13: St. Ambrose*



*PHOTO 14: St. Peter*



*PHOTO 15: St. Augustine*



*PHOTO 16: St. Jerome*

Photos by Pepa Tanousis